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TAGS: PREL PGOV KDEM LE SY TU
SUBJECT: TURKISH EFFORTS ON LEBANESE PRESIDENCY

REF: A. SECSTATE 163945

¶B. ANKARA 2930(NOTAL)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (c) Further to reftels, Ambassador spoke December 11 with Turkish Presidency/PM foreign affairs advisor Davutoglu about the Lebanese presidency state of play. Davutoglu said that he and PM Erdogan have been in touch on an almost daily basis over the past couple of weeks with key players in Beirut and other regional capitals, especially President Asad in Damascus. He claimed some credit for the compromise on Sleiman following Turkish interventions with Berri, Hariri, Siniora advisor Mohammed Chattah and others, which reflected compromise by everyone, including the March 14 majority. Davutoglu indicated that Turkey is continuing its efforts now to develop a way around the constitutional problem that requires parliament and cabinet agreement to fix. The question is how to do this, and Davutoglu seemed aware of the Lebanese discussions reported recently by Embassy Beirut.

¶2. (c) Ambassador urged against linkages of the presidential elections to other issues. He said the March 14 majority has already made significant concessions in agreeing to support Sleiman. Turkey has supported PM Siniora, and it should help to minimize any arrangements that would undercut him and March 14.

¶3. (c) Davutoglu responded that a practical solution is achievable without more concessions by one side or the other. Turkey is trying to produce a creative solution that will reduce tensions in Lebanese politics and avoid a crisis there. He agreed to keep Ambassador posted.

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